

*Employment and Immigration*

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** You speak too much.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** It is a shameful performance on the part of the hon. member, to sit in the back benches and make his snarky remarks. He is doing a disservice to his constituents.

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** Let my constituents decide that.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** I will not, Mr. Speaker. I will not let the hon. member across the way make his snarky remarks without being identified. I think he deserves to be identified. The study was done in 1973-74 when the unemployment rate, comparatively speaking, was much much lower than it is today. Furthermore, when we asked in committee how the officials went about compiling their information, "Oh" said the deputy minister, "Oh, oh" said the deputy deputy minister, "Oh, oh, oh" said the deputy deputy deputy minister, and "Oh, oh, oh, oh" said the deputy deputy deputy deputy minister. They said, "Mr. Rodriguez, we have the in-house study, we have the outhouse study, we have the round-house study, we have the back-house study, we have the narrative reports, and we have the personal interviews".

**An hon. Member:** You are a shame to the House.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** We found out that some of those in-house studies and narrative reports came to some fascinating conclusions. For example, they told us there should be no trouble in Atlantic Canada for any person who wants to find eight weeks of work, no problem at all. Just listen to them say it. They say there are jobs that are scattered all the way from northern New Brunswick, the area of the hon. member across the way who has been throwing in his cheap little remarks—

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** You are the expert on cheap remarks.

**Mr. Rodriguez:**—up to Newfoundland. They say there are jobs floating around and that, with perhaps a few exceptions, there is no reason in the world why people could not find work. It was as if I were meeting with the St. John's board of trade all over again. So far as they were concerned, if you did away with the Unemployment Insurance Act they could get work for all those people in Newfoundland. For example, studies done by the Canada Manpower centres showed instances of potential claimants quitting their jobs at the peak of the season so as to qualify with the highest average insured earnings possible.

In addition, these Manpower centre studies said there are indications that a number of workers arrange to be laid off once qualified for UI benefits so that someone else may obtain eight weeks of insured employment. I made the comment the other day that these people discovered shared work long before the minister ever thought of putting it into effect. I suggest that members get hold of a copy of "Employment Patterns in the Atlantic Provinces". I intend to send a copy to every provincial member in the Atlantic region and in Newfoundland to show them what Manpower centres think is going on in

[Mr. Rodriguez.]

the maritime provinces. This is a shameful document, shameful in all the insinuations and innuendoes it makes about the work force in Atlantic Canada. I do not see the hon. member across the way standing on his hands and demanding clarification of these statements.

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** You are the only one who stands on his hands when he wants to speak.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** The one conclusion I come to is that the people who designed these studies and who spoke about them in committee have never been unemployed in their lives. They sit there with their \$60,000 a year jobs and pontificate on the attitudes of the unfortunate Canadians who want to work and cannot find work in some parts of this country. We see a shameful display by the government when it uses the unemployed as scapegoats and as red herrings, as the former minister of manpower and immigration said. This is a red herring to try to distract people from realizing that this government has failed to deal decisively with unemployment. It is absolutely disgraceful that the minister can stand up in British Columbia and say to the Canadian people that they can look forward to high unemployment and high food prices for the next few years. Since when have admissions of failure become responses to the problems faced by this nation? This is the kind of travesty that is perpetrated by this government, and then it asks members of my party and parliament to participate in this hoax on the Canadian people.

● (1210)

Hon. colleagues to my right have fallen for this, stepped right in and broken their wrists patting themselves on the back, and taken credit for the stiffer requirements and the reduction of the benefit period. They say they have been pushing the government on this since 1971 and that if the government had listened, we would not be in the mess we are in today. Instead of tightening up the Unemployment Insurance Act, I think we should come up with more positive suggestions on creating employment so that every Canadian who wants to work can get a job. We cannot blame the official opposition for not creating jobs, because it has not been sitting on the government benches for years. The government which is proud to tell us that it has been the government for years has the divine power to rule, but I wish it would start using that power so we would not have one million people unemployed. That is the figure given to us by Statistics Canada, but that is not the hidden unemployment figure. When the task force of my party visited Atlantic Canada to discuss unemployment, we discovered that the real unemployment rate in Atlantic Canada is 15 per cent or 20 per cent higher than the figure given by Statistics Canada.

The government proposes to superimpose on the country some 54 regions. After many years, the government has suddenly discovered that there are regional differences in Canada. It took three weeks from the time it tabled Bill C-27 before government backbenchers started flapping and getting on the minister's back. Suddenly, the minister rushed in with a hastily contrived regional approach to unemployment insurance. If it